

INSPECTION REPORT

ST. JOHN'S C.E. V.C. FIRST SCHOOL

Tisbury, Salisbury

LEA area : Wiltshire

Unique reference number : 126388

Headteacher : Mrs. B. Aldous

Reporting inspector : Mrs Elizabeth Camplin
3586

Dates of inspection : 16th – 19th October 2000

Inspection number : 224287

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First school
School category:	Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 - 9
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Reverend Richard Wren
Date of previous inspection:	8 th July 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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Ann Moss O.I.N 9079	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How the school cares for its pupils Partnership with parents
Ken Watson O.I.N 29378	Team inspector	Mathematics Science Information Technology Art Design & Technology Special Educational Needs Physical Education Equal Opportunities	Curricular and other opportunities

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	06 - 09
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	10 - 11
The school's results and achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	11 - 12
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	12 - 14
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	14
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS	14 - 15
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	15 - 16
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	16 - 17
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	18 - 21
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	22 - 36

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St John's Church of England Voluntary Controlled School is situated on the fringe of the Wiltshire village of Tisbury. Though it is smaller than most primary schools the roll is rising due to village expansion and admission of pupils from outside the area. Currently there are 106 registered children between four and nine years of age. 21 are Reception age, of whom 6 attend part-time and 6 are from ethnic minorities. The first language of all children is English. New admissions are steadily reflecting a more diverse social, cultural, and economic mix. The number entitled to free school meals is gradually falling but is still within the average percentage band. Family background and attainment on entry are now both broadly average with a reasonable proportion of children having good social, communication and reasoning skills. However, a far higher than national average percentage of children have learning difficulties, many associated with speech and language disability. There are 3 pupils with statements of special educational needs and 2 more are awaiting them. All are boys. Similar school comparative data in the report is adjusted by one point to take account of the special educational needs factor.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school. It is enabling children to achieve close to capacity in most of their work, especially in the core skills of writing, reading, number and ICT. Pupils are well behaved and very keen to learn. The teaching is never less than satisfactory and is good or better in three-quarters of lessons. Teaching and support staff work very effectively together and devise challenging and stimulating learning activities. The quality of care and provision for children's welfare is high, and parents' views are respected and their partnership encouraged. The school is very well led and managed and has a rigorous school improvement plan and programme of action. Since the previous inspection standards have risen from average to above national expectation overall. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- It meets the aspirations of parents in the high quality of education it provides.
- Inspired by the headteacher, the whole school community work as a team to reflect a shared commitment to fulfilling the apt Mission Statement and curriculum aims.
- It enables children with widely different needs and aptitudes to enjoy school, and apply skills in literacy, numeracy and information & communication technology (ICT) very well.
- It helps children work at levels that closely reflect their individual capacity and exceed standards achieved by pupils in similar schools in writing and mathematics.
- It is developing very effective systems for managing change, monitoring performance and understanding how well its is succeeding in its efforts to improve standards and educational provision.

What could be improved

- In a quarter of lessons, but particularly those in science and games, teachers could improve upon the way they explain learning intentions and teach subject knowledge and skills to ensure that children make the best possible progress.
- The school and governors could improve upon the way they keep parents informed about how they work to meet their key aims and priorities, and celebrate success in raising educational quality and standards.
- By sustaining the effective action plan for improvement, standards in reading and spelling could continue to rise so that eventually they are as good as those in writing.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

School improvement since the previous inspection has been very good, particularly in the way the curriculum is planned, co-ordinated and evaluated. Standards of achievement have risen as a result, notably in writing and mathematics. It is an even better school than it was in July 1996 when judged to

be a successful school with many strengths and few weaknesses.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by seven-year-olds based on National Curriculum test results.

Performance in:	Compared with				Key
	All schools			Similar schools	
	1997	1998	1999	1999	
Reading	C	D	D	C	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
Writing	E	B	B	A	
Mathematics	E	D	C	B	

Standards are rising in core subjects. When taking prior attainment into account children achieved highly in writing and well in mathematics. A much higher than average percentage attained level 3 in these two areas whereas it was average in reading. In 1999 reading was the weakest outcome but satisfactory given the percentage of pupils with language-associated disabilities. Nonetheless, the school recognised that standards could be higher in reading and set challenging improvement targets for 2000 and 2001. There are reliable indicators that it is now enabling most children to achieve at their true capacity. Recent unofficial testing results at Years 3 and 4 show that since 1998 and 1999 the relevant year groups have made substantial gains.

At the foundation stage standards in the areas of learning are good. Current work indicates that standards are still rising at both key stages, especially in reading and spelling. Standards of literacy and numeracy are above average overall at Year 2 and Year 4. Higher achievers reach levels in core subjects that generally reflect or exceed their starting points whilst children with special educational needs are achieving highly in terms of their earlier attainment. Standards meet expectation in religious and physical education at Key Stage 1. They exceed expectation in science and all other foundation subjects at both key stages. At Year 4 standards in religious education are good and satisfactory in physical education but could be better in games.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. High percentage of children thoroughly enjoy school because they find learning activities interesting and like the atmosphere.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Children behave well in and out of school. They are polite and friendly. Incidents of inappropriate behaviour are very rare.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Children work and play very well together. They help and care for each other and are very tolerant of individual differences and needs.
Attendance	Levels of attendance are good. There is very little unauthorised absence.

Significant strengths are the responsible and positive approach children take to homework, and the way in which older pupils help the younger children. Children are developing conscientious attitudes to learning but a minority suffer occasional lapses in listening and concentration, especially at Key Stage 2, where a high percentage of pupils have significant special educational needs.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-9 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Very good	Good

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.

Teaching was at least satisfactory in 100% of lessons, good or better in 75%, and very good in 18%. Most very good teaching occurred at Year 1 and there was some very good teaching at Key Stage 2. More of the satisfactory teaching practice was at Key Stage 2. Almost every lesson at the foundation stage was good. Throughout the school teaching in English and mathematics is consistently good and half in English is very good. Lessons are never less than sound in all other subjects, though some potential exists to improve teacher expertise and enhance learning in aspects of science and games techniques. Many opportunities are provided for all children to use literacy, numeracy and ICT skills productively in cross-curricular tasks. The careful management of children ensures obstacles to learning are rapidly overcome. Those with special educational needs receive very sensitive and skilled teaching. Children on the register, especially those with statements, progress very well. More able pupils are also usually well served.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school's curriculum is of high quality and very effectively planned to achieve breadth, balance and relevance at all three primary stages.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Excellent overall. The curriculum is particularly well adapted for children of all ages with widely differing and complex special educational needs.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision in all aspects of personal development is a significant strength of the school. Pupils are taught very effectively to value each other, their surroundings and community. They are encouraged to respect their own heritage and the culture and beliefs of people in other countries.
How well the school cares for its pupils	School procedures for ensuring care and welfare are well documented and consistently implemented. Assessment results in rigorous individual and class target setting, very perceptive record-keeping and very good end of year reports for parents.

Links with parents are good and make a positive difference to children's performance at school. The partnership with the PIP club is a significant strength. Induction and provision for the Reception group has improved considerably since the last inspection, and especially since becoming involved in the Effective Early Learning initiative. There is still potential to improve communication with parents. The school is skilful in making cross-curricular links through well-planned topics and themes. Personal, social and health education is also promoted effectively through subject areas, particularly science, D&T and PE. There is very effective use of community resources to enhance the curriculum.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	High quality. The headteacher and her deputy share a strong vision for promoting high standards and good teaching and learning. They are very effectively supported by curriculum co-ordinators.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are effective. They share a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and set appropriate priorities for development.
The school's evaluation of its performance	There are very rigorous procedures for monitoring standards and for implementing necessary remedial action. The school is quick to address and overcome weaknesses.
The strategic use of resources	The school's spending decisions are very effectively linked to educational priorities. The use of special grants particularly benefits pupils with special educational needs.

The match of teachers and support staff to the demands of the curriculum is very good and children benefit from access to a wide range of learning resources. Outdoor facilities are good, and used well, but there are shortcomings in the design of the building that detract from high quality. There is a relative weakness in some aspects of communication between home and school. The governing body carefully and successfully plan, budget and review costs and spending to achieve good value for its resources.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents value the school for its educational aims and policies and caring ethos. • Most are very pleased with the way their children make progress. • They have high regard for the staff, the teaching and the breadth of the curriculum. • They are very pleased with the PIP club and induction of new admissions. • They approve of the approach to homework. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some would like further guidance on how to help children extend their literacy skills. • Some Key Stage 2 parents would like to see curriculum plans on display in school. • Some would like the prospectus to contain more information about the school. • A small minority want even better teaching for the more able children.

Inspectors found that parents know the school and its strengths well, and feel valued as partners. They are pleased to be able to help their children with homework. Inspectors agree that aspects of communication and teaching could be strengthened.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. Children currently enter school with broadly average levels of attainment, though the spectrum of strengths and weaknesses varies considerably from year to year. Class groups at Years 2 to 4, for example, have a high percentage of pupils, almost all boys, who started school with complex special educational needs. Many of these needs relate to speech and other aspects of language development. The current Reception group should exceed the early learning goals expected by the end of the foundation stage, notably in communication, language and literacy, mathematical and personal, social and emotional development. The youngest children's oral skills and confidence with reading, writing, number and problem solving are developing well. Their achievement is good compared with prior attainment on entry. They most need to strengthen achievement in the foundations of design and technology.
2. The school's most recent Key Stage 1 statutory assessment test results for which comparative data is available were above the national average in writing and high when compared against schools with a similar intake. Results in mathematics were broadly average and below average in reading by national standards. However, children performed at least as well as children in similar schools and their attainment in science was sound in 1999.
3. Over the period 1996 to 1999 standards in reading and mathematics have been below average overall but nonetheless have steadily improved year on year. The indicators are that they are close to average in reading this year and still above average in mathematics. For two years in succession pupils at Year 4 have done very well in unofficial tests in all aspects of literacy and numeracy, and exceed the scores achieved by others in a national sample. Their gains are very good. Overall, higher achieving children reach levels in tests in core subjects that reflect or exceed their starting points. Those with special educational needs achieve highly in terms of their earlier attainment. The school sets relevant achievement targets for all its pupils and is successful in reaching them. When taking prior levels of attainment into account there are no significant differences in the achievement of boys and girls.
4. Current work indicates that standards are continuing to rise, especially in spelling, reading comprehension and in all attainment targets in mathematics. A minority of children with special educational needs, still have specific difficulties with reading and spelling. Nonetheless standards of literacy and numeracy are above average at Key Stage 1 and at Year 4 because children have so many good opportunities in all curriculum areas to apply these basic skills. At Year 2 and Year 4 standards of listening are good, and use of subject vocabulary is very good, orally and in writing. Most children realise how important it is to understand their individual and class learning objectives. They remember them well. They participate appropriately in discussions and mental number operations. They are good at making careful and reasoned responses to searching questions and numerical problems posed by teachers and supporting adults. They also exceed expectation in science, ICT, art, design and technology, music, history and geography. Their attainment in every foundation subject is at least sound.
5. There is potential for pupils to achieve a better standard in games and to continue to improve in reading and spelling. Overall most pupils work at, or near, capacity and succeed with challenging work in a high percentage of lessons.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

6. Pupils' response to school expectations and the Christian ethos is very good. They develop conscientious attitudes to learning, respect and care for others and the environment.
7. When children start school they are quickly at home. Most thoroughly enjoy school, are interested in the activities provided for them, and are keen to learn. They develop good habits of working, settle down quickly to tasks and persevere with them. However, when activities go on for too long, particularly at Key Stage 2, pupils begin to lose concentration and their learning time is not fully maximised.
8. Standards of behaviour are good. Children behave well in lessons, at play, during lunch-times and when on visits out of school. They clearly understand what is expected and respect the 'Golden Rules' and conventions that exist to safeguard them. Incidents of inappropriate behaviour are very rare.
9. All children, including those with special educational needs, are at ease in the classroom and around the school. They listen to each other carefully in many lessons as they share ideas and feelings. All children are polite and are appreciative when visitors come into school, for example to lead an assembly, or help with art and craft activities. They show a sensitive awareness of people less fortunate than themselves as they demonstrate by collecting for charities and by being aware of the width and depth of the work done by OXFAM. They show mature and caring attitudes to pupils with severe learning difficulties and form very good relationships with each other and with adults.
10. Children make very good progress in their personal development. They develop a strong sense of responsibility for looking after each other, the school and the environment. From Reception they take turns to shoulder special tasks such as to keep classrooms tidy and organised. Older children operate the overhead projector for assembly, help to organise Harvest Festival and run stalls for the fete. Year 4 pupils worked particularly hard on suggesting improvements for the outside play-area for the very youngest children. The school appreciates the value of developing initiative and autonomy and this is being demonstrated by an improvement in independent study at home. Pupils now show highly positive attitudes to homework assignments, which is an improvement since the previous inspection in 1996.
11. Attendance levels are good, being just above the national average, and punctuality has improved since the last inspection. There have been no exclusions.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

12. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. In lessons seen it was particularly effective at all stages in English, mathematics and music. Half the lessons at Year 1 are very good because of the teacher's substantial knowledge and understanding of the primary curriculum and consistently effective teaching methods, irrespective of the subject. All except one of the lessons at the foundation stage were good with a strong emphasis on learning through practical activities well matched to the needs of the age group. Only a physical education lesson, though soundly taught overall, had some issues with respect to learning objectives being rather too demanding for such new admissions. The scrutiny of work indicates science at Key Stage 1 and, at both key stages, ICT and most foundation subjects are also often taught very well. In fact there are no subjects or areas of learning where teaching and learning are less than

satisfactory. Just occasionally lesson plans contain too many objectives to be achievable, (this was true of one lesson in English) or teachers display some lack of confidence in subject content. Two lessons in science and two in physical education fell into this category.

13. Throughout the school national initiatives to raise standards in basic skills have been embraced by staff with enthusiasm and commitment. They are very effective in ensuring children acquire and apply literacy, numeracy, and ICT knowledge, understanding and skills through meaningful cross-curricular tasks. They also make imaginative use of homework assignments, which most children undertake with considerable thought and care. Children are motivated to practise and improve, not just because of stimulating activities but because they enjoy seeing their work celebrated in well mounted displays around the school.
14. Teachers' relationships with pupils are very positive and individual needs are known in depth. The contribution made by support staff and adult volunteers also makes a significant difference to the intellectual, physical and creative effort children make, including those on the register of special educational needs and especially those with statements. Teachers are very careful to diagnose difficulties and special aptitudes and use their assessment findings to help plan learning intentions in every lesson. Usually these are explained well and then children are clear about what they have to do, and why. Teachers generally teach in such a way that all pupils make sustained progress and develop confidence and self-esteem.
15. The quality of teaching is least consistent at Years 3 and 4. This is because expectations for effort and concentration, and for exercising responsibility for clearing up, are sometimes not shared explicitly enough. The management of pupils, though normally good, has occasional lapses, or teaching methods lack focus. For example, in an otherwise interesting and enjoyable geography lesson children lacked a sense of urgency and their productivity slowed down. The more able, in particular, could have worked at a better pace.
16. The school now needs to address the relative weaknesses described, especially those in science and physical education, so that the quality of teaching and learning becomes consistently good or better.

HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?

17. Since the last report in 1996, the school has made very good progress with the key issue to strengthen curriculum planning. Long-term planning is now detailed, imaginative, and particularly strong in the way in which it capitalises on well thought out cross-curricular links. The school fully meets statutory requirements including the provision of religious education, and is very successful in providing a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum for all its children at all three primary stages.
18. Policies and schemes of work are in place for all subjects and areas of learning. They contain much sound practical advice, and are thorough in including such areas as special educational needs, equal opportunities, personal, social and health education. They are regularly reviewed and where necessary adapted to meet the needs of the children. Provision for the Reception age group is much better than at the time of the last report. Participation in the Effective Early Learning national initiative is having a significant impact at the foundation stage.

19. The provision for children with special educational needs is excellent. The co-ordinator and other teaching staff work closely with the high quality teacher assistants to provide full access to the curriculum for all children on the register including the higher than average number with statements. Targets in Individual Education Plans, which are often reviewed weekly, are related closely to individual needs, and to the ongoing work in the classroom. All members of staff are very aware of individual needs and targets, and seek to meet those needs at every opportunity, outside as well as inside the classroom. A good example was provided when during lunch, one of the lunch-time supervisors quietly encouraged a child with a speech difficulty to pronounce a word more clearly. More able children are almost as rigorously included in planning, and the school has a good system for keeping a record of children with particular skills or aptitudes.
20. National strategies aimed at raising standards have been successfully implemented. The school is very effective in promoting literacy and numeracy outside English and mathematics lessons. Teachers are very adept at providing opportunities to extend writing skills in subjects such as history, geography and religious education, and equally good at exploiting physical education, design and technology, and ICT to enhance learning in mathematics. A previous weakness in planning for reading and spelling is being systematically addressed by the school. Personal, social and health education is also well promoted through the 'Health for Life' project, and particularly in subjects such as physical education and science. Visits from the 'Life Van' help with education relating to drugs.
21. Links with the community are very good. The school has regular contact with pre-school providers and very good liaison with other local schools. Together they organise joint ventures such as the cluster dance days, analyse test results, and decide on, and arrange, training opportunities. Wider community links include visits to such local venues as shops and fire station, the involvement of the health visitor and district nurse in health education. Liaison with the neighbouring middle school is well established, with teachers from the school coming in to meet the Year 4 pupils, who in turn spend three days in the middle school during the summer term. A good range of extra-curricular activities is also organised covering areas such as sport and music. The Investigators and Watch Club makes a very good contribution to environmental awareness.
22. The good provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, a strong feature at the time of the last inspection, has been maintained and enhanced. In the current term there is a strong emphasis on cultural themes with excellent use being made of the visits of a Nigerian artist to look at art, music, dance and language from the African continent. The school is very astute in exploiting the cultural heritage of its own pupils when opportunities arise, and at making links with other subjects such as geography and history.
23. Moral and social development is strong. 'Golden Rules' for the whole school feature prominently in every classroom, and each class regularly reviews its own rules. The staff are good role-models and are very sensitive in the way they handle children's concerns or worries. The children are taught to be very caring towards each other, to work and play well together and to show appreciation for the efforts of other pupils. A school priority is to promote independence and autonomy, so teachers are trying to consciously plan more opportunities for choice and negotiation in the classroom. Plans are in hand for the formation of a school council, which should help to develop these aspects of learning.
24. Spiritual development is very well promoted through assemblies and circle-time, and through the appreciation of art, music and poetry. Once a week the whole school comes

together for a celebration of individual and class achievement, an opportunity that is valued and respected by children and parents. Links with the church make a strong contribution through such special events as the Harvest Festival, and the regular participation in assemblies by members of the clergy.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

25. The school has very good procedures for ensuring children's welfare and very high standards of pastoral care. Staff and governors undertake regular and thorough health and safety checks on the premises though this term the formal procedure for risk assessment was delayed because of serious problems encountered with building work. They receive appropriate training to enable them to keep up-to-date with legislative requirements for health and safety and child protection. Written policies are relevant, clear and understood by all staff. They are vigilant in following guidance for the care of children with specific medical needs. Support services are used very effectively for children with special educational needs.
26. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are good, though there are times when teachers miss opportunities to address lapses of concentration at Key Stage 2. There is a significant strength in the way in which pupils' attainment and progress is assessed and recorded and then used to inform curriculum plans and individual improvement targets. Children are given regular opportunities to discuss how well they are achieving these targets with teachers. The homework policy is also effective in supporting children's independent learning.
27. The school has good procedures for checking, encouraging and improving attendance. It rigorously follows up any unexplained absences. The attendance rates, although above the national average, are still not as high as the school would wish due to extended holidays. Punctuality has improved since the previous report.
28. All staff share a sensitive but effective approach to promoting high standards of personal conduct and eliminating oppressive behaviour. Circle-time is particularly effective for enabling children to discuss views and feelings and resolve problems. The headteacher and staff listen to parents' concerns and take swift remedial action to resolve anxieties. There is a strong emphasis on raising self-esteem.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

29. The views of parents are highly positive. They very much appreciate the school's induction procedures, and its family ethos. Links with them are good and make a positive difference to pupils' attitudes to learning and performance at school. The PIP club sessions prior to admission are particularly effective. They enable parents to get to know how the foundation stage curriculum is organised, to meet teachers and support assistants and share information about their children's development. There is effective consultation through meeting with parents at the beginning of each term to discuss targets in literacy and numeracy and specific class targets. Written reports are very good and contain clear information on children's progress and future learning needs. The school runs workshops on how to help children read and write, and there are useful plans for parents to receive opportunities to train as helpers in the classroom. Parents provide very good support for special events such as Harvest Festival.
30. Parents find all staff very approachable and view the quality of care their children receive highly. The imaginative homework tasks, such as looking for habitats or finding out which food products contain sugar, profitably involve the family in extending learning in core

skills and in finding information relevant to current topics. These tasks also enable parents to improve their awareness of how well their children are progressing.

31. Parents are encouraged to help in classrooms and the school is grateful to those who do by, for example, hearing reading and helping with cooking. Most parents take an interest in what the school has to offer and the Parents and Friends of St. John's First School Association is a small but committed group which manifests this through very effective fund-raising efforts. They have made a significant contribution towards the children's learning through providing, for example, a tape player and play equipment.
32. The inspection confirms the positive views of the vast majority of parents. For example, the school is a caring community that promotes pupils' self-esteem and good personal development. Parents' constructive suggestions for further improvement in communication with them were also supported. Inspectors found that information is lacking in the school's annual prospectus about, for example, extra-curricular activities and how to support the Parents and Friends of St. John's First School Association. Inspectors found that parents of younger children have access to a notice-board with considerable information about curricular opportunities and their purpose. Parents of older children would welcome similar information for Key Stage 2.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

33. The headteacher and her deputy provide leadership and management of high quality. Both make a significant contribution to the growing effectiveness of the school. They have a thorough grasp of its strengths and weaknesses and understand how to inspire colleagues, plan and manage change. Delegation of responsibility amongst other staff is also very effective. Co-ordinators make a strong contribution to curriculum development. Individual expertise is a significant factor contributing to raising achievement in English, mathematics, ICT, music, art, and at the foundation stage. Priorities as defined in the school's action plans are relevant and achievable. They are clearly linked to promoting high standards through improved teaching and learning. Progress towards meeting them is good.
34. The headteacher, staff and governors share a strong vision for a special Christian ethos. This is well communicated through the Mission Statement and school aims. These aims underpin the curriculum and in turn this provides children with firm foundations for all the essentials of a high quality education.
35. Governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities well. They play an important part in shaping policy, and in managing financial, human and physical resources. For example, when appointing the deputy headteacher they knew exactly the qualities and skills they were looking for to improve provision for Reception children. They also knew what fresh insight they needed when an experienced teacher retired in the summer term. Both appointments have been beneficial in strengthening the expertise in the team and addressing known weaknesses. Governors visit the school frequently. Their brief reports could be even more useful if a short evaluative summary of what they had learnt or achieved was included at the end.
36. The headteacher presents termly reports to governors and they discuss them in depth. They are well informed about standards as compared with results in other schools. They have a particularly firm grasp of how to make the best use of school resources, funds and special grants and they achieve good value for money. Very good use is made of external agencies, for example through setting up a multi-disciplinary approach to supporting pupils with learning difficulties. Interested parties are consulted about their

aspirations when the time comes for reviewing and revising the School Development Plan. Governors are keen to promote the partnership with the diocese and parents and encourage the professional development of staff. They have produced a detailed draft policy for performance management though it should explicitly explain how the advocated process takes full account of the need to guarantee objectivity and impartiality.

37. There are some weaknesses in communication systems. The headteacher's reports are not explicit enough in the way progress with the School Development Plan is summarised. Parents at Key Stage 2 are not as well informed about curricular provision as the parents of younger pupils. In turn, governors have not spent enough time on evaluating their annual publications for parents. The range and outcomes of extra-curricular activities, for example, are not described in the prospectus, or details of the work of the parents' association. Results of statutory assessment are published but there is little emphasis on the interpretation of them or on explaining how well the school meets the widely differing needs of its pupils.
38. The match of teachers and support staff to the demands of the curriculum is very good. It adds significantly to educational quality as well as accounting for children's enthusiasm for school. Induction procedures work very well and enable new staff to quickly feel comfortable and perform their duties effectively. Professional development opportunities are viewed positively. They are organised to meet prioritised needs such as extending staff confidence and expertise in science. Accommodation has improved in recent years. Outdoor facilities are used well to promote physical and personal development, and investigative activities in mathematics, science and geography. There are, however, still some shortcomings in the building design that detract from high quality. These include the poorly sited library, the cramped office accommodation, the lack of quiet areas and a medical room.
39. The school has made very good progress since the last inspection. It demonstrates a proven capacity to succeed with improvement plans and should persevere with its current key priority to continue to improve standards in spelling and reading. A further key issue for action will be to improve the way it communicates its methods of working and celebrates success, through its school environment and publications for parents.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

40. In order to enhance the way it meets its educational aims the school should now :-
 - i. *Continue to carefully monitor, evaluate and develop teaching and learning methods, especially in science and games, so that children are always clear about learning intentions and make the best possible progress in extending their knowledge or developing their skills. (paragraph reference numbers: 12, 16, 82, 84, 116)*
 - ii. *Critically evaluate and improve the way in which the school keeps parents informed about how they work to meet their key aims and priorities, and celebrates success in raising educational quality and standards. (paragraph reference numbers: 32, 37)*
 - iii. *Sustain the effective action being taken to develop children's skill and confidence in reading and spelling in order to continue raising standards. (paragraph reference numbers: 5, 39, 57, 71)*

Minor issues

Governors may also wish to include in their action plan details of plans to improve aspects of the building and accommodation. (*paragraph reference numbers: 38, 70*)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	28
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	28

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	18	57	25	0	0	0

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y4
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		102
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		9

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y4
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		40

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	11
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	2

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	94.60

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.10

National comparative data	94.10
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National comparative data	0.50
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Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	10	11	21

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	5	8	8
	Girls	9	10	11
	Total	14	18	19
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	67 (77)	86 (81)	90 (84)
	National	82 (77)	83 (81)	87 (83)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	7	8	7
	Girls	9	9	11
	Total	16	17	18
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	76 (81)	81 (85)	86 (86)
	National	84 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	
Black – African heritage	2
Black – other	
Indian	
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	
White	82
Any other minority ethnic group	1

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage		
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other		
Indian		
Pakistani		
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y4

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	4.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22.17
Average class size	25.50

Education support staff: YR – Y4

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	94

Financial information

Financial year	1999 - 2000
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	£
Total income	209602
Total expenditure	201024
Expenditure per pupil	2234
Balance brought forward from previous year	10684
Balance carried forward to next year	19262

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	72
Number of questionnaires returned	40

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	50	45	5	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	53	40	3	3	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	33	63	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	18	63	5	3	10
The teaching is good.	55	35	0	0	8
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	48	43	8	0	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	58	40	3	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	48	48	0	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	48	40	10	0	3
The school is well led and managed.	55	40	3	0	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	45	50	3	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	30	60	3	0	5

Two families wrote to the registered inspector indicating their high regard for the way the school supports their children.

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

41. Attainment by the end of the foundation stage is good and above expectation overall. Children of all levels of prior attainment make a very positive start to learning and their progress towards early learning goals is good. Most children achieve highly in relation to prior learning in mathematical, personal, social and emotional development and some aspects of communication, language and literacy. Their attainment is good in knowledge and understanding of the world in the foundations for ICT and the humanities. There is potential, as the school has also identified, to improve in the foundations for design and technology. Attainment is sound in creative and physical development.

Personal social and emotional development

42. The transition from home and playgroup to school is impressively managed. Once a week, in the year prior to admission, parents bring their children in to school where they experience lots of activities, indoors and outside. Families are encouraged to borrow books and games in specially provided homework packs. All this careful pre-school preparation makes a significant contribution to the rapidity with which staff get to know parents, carers, and children and understand individual needs. It ensures all children look forward to school and settle quickly and happily. Much information is gathered and recorded and then carefully analysed. It is used creatively from the outset to help set learning targets for each child.
43. The commitment to plan rigorously, and excellent relationships both between individual members of staff and between staff and families makes teaching particularly good in this area of learning. Children's self-confidence and self-esteem is consistently fostered through an approach based on positive encouragement, clear expectations, and good communication. Children already show they feel valued members of the school community. In most contexts they co-operate very well when working and playing together, and are keen to conform to behaviour expectations.

Communication, language and literacy

44. This area is taught well and enables children to make very good progress in developing reading, and speaking and listening skills. Children have a wealth of experience of looking at books and already know a lot about how they are organised. They discuss other reading opportunities such as the many labels provided around the classroom. The teacher incorporates many ideas for extending literacy skills in virtually all classroom activities.
45. Every day children hear and read a variety of good texts such as 'The Farm Concert'. The skilful way in which the teacher reads this story aloud captured children's interest and imagination. Most tried very hard to join in reading the repetitive phrases. The more able did this with confidence. Good questioning and explanation led to some children extending, and the majority understanding for the first time, what a concert actually is. They also learnt how to moderate the volume of their voices according to the size of printed words and phrases.
46. Classroom support assistants are used very effectively to extend children's knowledge of letters of the alphabet, and understanding of how to link sounds with letters. For

example, a game to extend children's knowledge of phonemes and ability to sort and match objects into 'sound' sets caught children's enthusiasm. The activity provided plenty of opportunity for talk. It helped children to think carefully, explain and check their response for accuracy. Errors were observed and sensitively rectified.

47. Support for the development of handwriting and writing for different purposes is good. The teacher models writing for most children, being careful to record the children's own suggestions. Adults also encourage these young writers to 'have a go' in their books and in creative activities such as making letter shapes in the sand. Most children already hold a pencil effectively to make recognisable letters, whilst the most advanced can already write their own names and some letters independently.
48. The main point for further development is the way in which expressive language is encouraged through role-play. The suggestion to enact the 'Farm Concert' was a good one but was not taken up by the children mainly because of the lack of intervention from an adult to encourage and develop the play.

Mathematical development

49. Teaching is consistently good and children are keen and confident in their learning. The teacher makes learning fun. From the work seen in many photograph albums and from written assessment, the high quality of teachers' preparation and planning was easy to see. There is plenty of emphasis in lessons on practical activities for counting, matching, sorting, calculating, and acquiring mathematical language. For example, children all improved their knowledge of the sequence of numbers as they practised chanting and doing actions for several number rhymes. Some of these were demanding and involved numbers to 20 which most could do. The spontaneous contribution of a mathematically gifted child demonstrated that a minority can count accurately and confidently beyond 30. Most children recognise the symbols for addition, subtraction and equals, and can make a number sentence on the whiteboard. Most also understand the concept of 'more and less' than and the more able can use the term 'fewer' appropriately.
50. In the lessons observed there were just a few points to improve. One was in the organisation of the size of groups for practical learning activities. Children were patient and sensible as they played a board-game to consolidate understanding of more and less but had quite a long wait for their turn. Another issue is the extent to which children's spontaneous remarks are built upon. More use could be made of the 100 square wallchart and the magnetic numbers on the whiteboard to encourage those children who are mathematically advanced to show what they can do so that they are further motivated to learn.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

51. Inspectors did not undertake any direct observation of lessons with a specific focus on this area of learning. The plans for the term, and the photographic and other evidence of provision in this area, are, however, very detailed and thorough. They reveal the depth with which staff review and evaluate what they provide and take steps to strengthen perceived weaknesses. Their own research led them to conclude that the foundations for design and technology needed to improve and they are working on extending the amount of time they allow for these experiences.
52. It was possible to tell from talking to children and watching them at work that they are developing attitudes and qualities that will equip them to do well in the foundations of science, technology, history, geography and religious education. They love to explore

and investigate as they showed when finding objects for their sounds sorting game. They are curious to learn what can be done with a concept keyboard, computers, tape recorders and other audio-visual aids. They appreciate the many everyday uses of technology because such extensive use is made of its cross-curricular application in and around the school. Children revealed a good sense of time, place, and special occasion as they talked about the 'Farm Concert' story, and Harvest Festival. The most difficult issue for the school is providing space in the classroom to manage the organisation of making and building with big bricks and construction toys. Even when it is possible it is difficult to retain and display the outcomes. That is why the extensive use of photographs is so useful as a record of achievement.

Physical development

53. Teaching and learning outcomes are sound. Good use was seen to be made of the outdoor area and large equipment for enabling children to explore space, devise their own games, and use equipment games safely and imaginatively. It was impressive to see the way the Reception children worked co-operatively with visiting pre-school age children. It was in the physical development lesson in the hall that some children needed more careful guidance and instruction. Links with prior learning in shape and measure were imaginatively planned. However, some children had problems in understanding how to control their bodies and movement to represent some of the shapes and patterns. They were a little too noisy to concentrate and listen as well as they should to make rapid progress. They enjoyed the lesson and most were independent in their undressing and dressing. The teacher realised they need more experience of lessons in the hall before they are ready for complex or multiple instructions.

Creative development

54. Not nearly enough teaching and learning was seen at first hand to be absolutely clear about quality of teaching and learning. The standard of what was achieved during formal observation was satisfactory. A few children were seen painting letter shapes with just a limited choice of colour and two or three were making letter shapes in the sand. Children concentrated well but had little opportunity in the context of these activities to explore and use their own initiative. There was enough secondary evidence to conclude provision is at least sound and can be very good. For example, casual observation of free-play activities when passing through the reception bays indicated that children receive lots of opportunities to dress-up for role-play, to play with small world toys, and to sing and play musical instruments. There are some excellent photographs of children enjoying appropriate opportunities. Apt examples are those where children are dramatising 'The Enormous Turnip' story and of pretending to be doctors and nurses, and caring for a new baby.

Other factors

55. Provision for Reception age children has improved considerably since the previous inspection when it received some criticism. It is now a significant strength and developing at an impressive rate. Staff has a good understanding of how to use the early learning goals in relevant contexts, and how to make good use of resources and personnel. Much of what has been achieved is due to the very good leadership and management of the Effective Early Learning project by the deputy headteacher. In this she has been strongly supported by the Reception classteacher and support assistants. The impact of their work has deservedly earned the recognition and respect of parents, governors and the Local Authority. The capacity to succeed with the excellent action plan is beyond question.

ENGLISH

56. Standards have improved steadily since the last inspection in 1996 when judged broadly sound but when results of statutory tests were all below average. Outcomes of statutory assessment tasks at the end of Key Stage 1 in 1999 were well above the national average in writing though, as before, still below average in reading. A much higher than average percentage of children now reach level 3 in writing tasks whilst the percentage doing so in reading is average. The indicators are that improvements have been sustained this year, with a significant percentage of pupils attaining level 3 in both reading and writing.
57. A less than rigorous analysis of results over the past four years would suggest that boys have been underachieving in reading. In fact this is not the case when attainment on entry is taken into account. A high percentage of boys in the current Year 4 and Year 3 were very low attainers on admission due to their specific and acute special educational needs for language associated or more complex learning difficulties. In comparison with similar schools these pupils make very good progress. They perform as well as their peers in reading, whilst their achievement in writing is particularly high. The school has rightly concluded, however, that all children need to improve comprehension skills and accuracy with spelling in order to raise standards further.
58. There is reliable data to show that attainment at Year 4 is increasingly good. There has been an accelerated rate of individual improvement since children did their SATs. The school has compared its results in non-statutory tests taken in 1999 and 2000 compared with those from a national sample of schools. These show that pupils outperform their peers in other schools and that the gap has widened in pupils' favour this year compared to last.
59. Overall, current standards at Year 2 and Year 4 exceed national expectations. The achievement of less able pupils is very good in relation to prior attainment whilst that of higher attainers is also good but could be even higher in reading. Speaking and listening skills are good. All children generally listen intently and answer questions cogently. Most express ideas with confidence, for example, about favourite books and authors. They can justify an opinion. One good example was when a group of mixed ability seven-year-olds discussed a book about the human body, when each explained their view of the relative merits of a page of prose compared with diagrams and captions on another. An example at Year 4 was when pupils explained why they enjoyed selected verses in psalms. The lower achievers were as willing as the rest to convey their thoughts and ideas.
60. Reading standards are sound. At Year 2 all pupils read a range of simple texts with a satisfactory level of understanding. However, some do not read aloud with confidence. They are generally accurate, knowing most commonly used vocabulary by sight. Most also decode unfamiliar words by using their knowledge of phonics, or use other clues to establish meaning. All children's early reference skills are good. At Year 4 most children read independently. Their comprehension is sound but they still need help to further improve their understanding. Their expression is developing steadily. Many can scan and summarise main factual points in reference materials related to other subjects. The more able are beginning to use the skills of inference and deduction when taking part in discussion groups.
61. The scrutiny of children's work demonstrates that writing is still relatively advanced. They make the most of links between what they read and talk about to use literacy skill

extensively in writing across the curriculum. Most seven-year-olds use narrative form well to compose stories in religious education such as their own version of an African story about harvest. Work in geography about the wind contains graphic descriptions of hurricanes and tornadoes. They use punctuation, including question and speech marks to create a lively style. Children make extensive use too of non-narrative form. Examples include detailed instructions for playing games in physical education, and questions for a survey about healthy eating in science and design and technology.

62. At Year 4 ideas are planned, drafted and further developed in interesting ways. The best creative writing is demarcated by chapters and paragraphs; for example the stories about Beowulf and the Dragon. They contain complex sentences and adventurous language. Accounts of investigations in science and geography are organised well. There is much evidence of very good use of ICT to refine and publish written work.
63. At both key stages the school has taken steps to address the weakest aspect of writing. Children's spelling is average and getting better. However, they still need to persevere to extend their knowledge of vowel and consonant blends, and rules such as when to double consonants within words and how to write plurals correctly.
64. The quality of teaching and learning is consistently good or better at both key stages. It is symptomatic of teachers' very good subject knowledge, and their skill in teaching basic skills. Teachers and their assistants know children and their needs very well, and their procedures for marking work, setting individual targets, and giving feedback, are very constructive and consistently implemented. Homework is set regularly and pupils appreciate it for its variety and emphasis on enjoyment. Assessment of the progress of children with statements of special educational needs is particularly impressive. Observations take place almost daily and small targets related to new spellings, simple punctuation, listening and comprehension' skills, are re-negotiated each week. Much care is taken to ensure that auditory aids for learning specified in statements are fully utilised. Two lessons exemplify well the ability of the whole staff to work effectively as a team.
65. At Key Stage 1 classroom assistants were carefully briefed and equipped with story 'props' to enable children with speech and language difficulties to re-tell the story of 'The Little Red Hen'. Another adult helper capably supported a middle ability group to read a version of the same story and deduce why speech bubbles can help to make a text come alive. Two other mixed ability groups worked well with the teacher to devise their own caption for a book they will make based on 'The Little Red Hen' story. The teacher made available key word cards, the 100 basic words list, and a story map. Then she ensured children used these resources and their time efficiently and productively. Children's response was impressive and they all made considerable progress in understanding and appreciating a repetitive text with a moral.
66. In the junior class very effective use was made of a small extract of non-fiction text about breathing. It was imaginatively linked to current work in science. Very skilful questioning led to all children identifying new scientific vocabulary, and learning pronunciation and spelling. For example, a fluent and capable pupil read 'diaphragm' correctly whilst a lower attaining child was able to work out the meaning of 'particle' using prior knowledge of the word 'part'. Over the course of the lesson pupils worked hard and produced some perceptive definitions for a variety of words chosen to challenge but not dishearten each one. The lesson fostered pupils' levels of motivation, ability to concentrate, and they rapidly improved their literacy skills.
67. At Key Stage 1 a point to improve is the extent to which the lesson contains just enough

new learning intentions to make the pace manageable. At Key Stage 2 an opportunity was missed to explicitly link learning outcomes to children's individual targets for the term. Higher achievers in particular could have been challenged to continue learning at home either to collect dictionary definitions, or use the words in a new context.

68. At both key stages children's attitudes and behaviour are always positive and often very good. They listen without interrupting and value all contributions. They share ideas and support each other in a variety of different groupings. Their main need is to sustain full concentration and gradually pursue their termly targets independently.
69. The subject is very well led and managed. Sustained improvement in standards of achievement is largely due to the success of the National Literacy Strategy, regular and thorough monitoring and review of provision and individual achievement. The action plan for literacy is very good. It includes plenty of training opportunities for staff and makes very effective use of special grants. There is an appropriate emphasis on the partnership with parents. Due account is taken of the wide range of aptitudes, and disabilities, and the plan is implemented with rigour. Challenging targets have been set for 2001.
70. Weaknesses in provision are relatively few. One is the position of the library and the extent to which pupils have access to it. The other is communication with parents to ensure that they are as well informed as possible. The aspirations of parents of children with special educational needs are fully met but parents of the more capable would appreciate further guidance about how to help their children at home.
71. Overall, the school is adding considerable value in relation to standards of achievement on entry and should continue to implement its action plan to improve standards in reading and spelling until they are as good as those in writing.

MATHEMATICS

72. Results of Key Stage 1 national tests over the past four years, show that standards are rising and have steadily improved since the last inspection in 1996. Last year's results, when compared with schools with similar intakes, show that attainment is above average, and very good in the proportion reaching the higher levels. Test outcomes show that the high achievers, and the above average proportion of children with special educational needs, have achieved well in relation to their prior attainment. Unconfirmed results for this year suggest that this trend is continuing and that standards are at least being maintained. Results of the unofficial test taken at the end of Year 4 demonstrate that pupils continue to make good progress and show above average achievement in their last year at the school.
73. Overall, pupils' achievement is good. Pupils have secure number knowledge, and knowledge of shape, space and measure. Even at Key Stage 1 they have wide experience of solving problems and investigating and using different methods of recording information. They often do this graphically, such as displaying the outcomes of a survey of the types of homes they live in. The attainment of children at Key Stage 2 in data handling is high. For example, they have used the Internet to find and interpret pie charts about how OXFAM obtains its funds.
74. At both key stages lessons observed were good both for the quality of teaching and the attitudes displayed by children. They responded very well to teachers' high expectations and joined in sensibly with oral work. This was particularly evident during the first part of the lessons, where the teachers' well-focused questions challenged the children to use different mental strategies. A notable feature was the skill with which all the staff, including the non-teaching staff, made sure that children with special educational needs,

including those with statements, were fully involved in the lesson. A good example in one lesson was where a statemented child was able to identify and describe a three-dimensional shape, and received a generous round of applause from the rest of the class.

75. The activity part of the lessons was not always quite as effective. There were times, particularly at Key Stage 2, when activities went on for too long, and lacked a sense of urgency. More able children could have been encouraged to work to more stringent time limits, for example when estimating the length of body parts. However, the plenary was very successful in ensuring the more able children shared what they had learnt about differences in their height and reach, and future class targets were discussed.
76. During group work good use of resources is made, and the use made of support staff is very good indeed. A lower achieving group was very well supported in developing understanding of how to use a tape-measure accurately, and improved their skills in estimating reach and height. As children work, teachers and classroom assistants continually assess pupils' progress, both formally and informally, and use the assessments to inform their future planning. Homework is set regularly and is often of an imaginative nature, for instance, at Key Stage 2, the number work on the age of family members, and an investigation of digits on car number-plates.
77. The school has successfully implemented the National Numeracy Strategy, and through good planning has ensured a curriculum which is broad, balanced and relevant to all the pupils in the school. Opportunities for cross-curricular work are very well exploited in subjects such as physical education, geography and design and technology, for instance when measuring, making and analysing strong triangular shapes for building bridges at Key Stage 2. ICT is widely used to enhance the curriculum, particularly in the areas of data handling and control technology. Detailed monitoring sheets are completed by all teachers, which show the varying levels of attainment achieved by different ability groups. For example, in the Year 2/3 class some of the more able can match fractions to percentages. They can divide and multiply to work out fractions and most can colour fractions on a shape and work out the amount not shaded. A few can only appreciate halves and quarters by folding and cutting paper. This detailed monitoring is very effective in ensuring that every child, including those on the register of special educational needs and those with statements, has very good equality of access and opportunity to the curriculum.
78. Leadership and management of the subject are good. Although the co-ordinator has only recently assumed responsibility, test results have already been analysed and some gaps identified are being addressed. For example, problems involving real life money and measures. The staff works well as a team and is always willing to undertake further training as opportunities and needs arise. Resources are generally good and constantly under review. Overall, the clear leadership, and commitment and expertise of the staff, should ensure that standards continue to rise over the next few years.

SCIENCE

79. During the inspection three lessons were observed. In addition, a considerable amount of work in books, photograph albums and on display was scrutinised, and discussions held with children and staff. Though above average standards were seen in only one out of the three lessons the volume of evidence collected indicate that standards in science, which were above average at the time of the last report, have been maintained.
80. Results of teacher assessment at Key Stage 1 over the last three years show an upward trend, despite an increase in the percentage of children with special educational

needs. These teacher assessments, and the unofficial tests taken at the end of Year 4, show that higher ability children are achieving above the national average in all attainment targets. Less able children reach standards below national expectations, but do well in relation to their prior attainment in all the attainment targets except physical processes.

81. The teaching quality observed was satisfactory at Key Stage 2, and good at Key Stage 1 though the quality of planning and assessment supports a judgement that it is good overall. Children throughout the school are currently studying life processes, and learning about humans and other animals. In Year 1 their attitudes were highly positive. They were eager to share observations and ideas and attentive when discussing the difference between living and non-living things. In the lesson the teacher was carefully assessing how well children had progressed over the previous half-term. The main activity, to draw or model a living and a non-living thing was well planned to take into account the different abilities of the children. Some less able children were taken outside by the assistant to collect some examples and were then encouraged to share their findings with the rest of the class. This consolidated understanding and enhanced their self-esteem. A particularly good feature of the lesson was the way in which the children were encouraged to exercise choice, and discuss ideas in pairs and small groups. This is encouraging independence and helping to develop reasoning, speaking and listening skills.
82. The top two classes were observed in lessons where they were learning more about their bodies. The children showed an appropriate level of knowledge about the human skeleton and what happens when they breathe. Discussions were generally of a good quality and the pupils were keen to share their ideas and find out more. The older pupils, who were testing what happens to their chests when they breathe in, were able to discuss whether or not a test was fair. In both lessons achievement could have been better if each teacher had demonstrated more confidence in scientific knowledge and been more precise about the learning objectives, particularly the scientific understanding which the pupils were expected to gain. During the activities some children lost concentration because they were not clear about the purpose of their task.
83. The curriculum is organised to provide a wide range of experiences for pupils and which substantially supports their personal, social and health education. Good use is made of visits and visitors, for instance the governor for science loans a human skeleton and animal skulls and explains the use of the bones and joints. A trip each year, organised by the Wiltshire Wildlife Trust, gives children the opportunity to work with specialists in pond-life, minibeasts, mammals and birds. The Investigators and Watch Club does much to encourage older children to take an interest in the local environment and good use is made of resources such as the school pond and garden. Links with other subjects are strong, for instance learning about healthy bodies in physical education, and the use of word processing and the digital camera to record projects. Homework is used imaginatively to enhance learning. For example, older children have sorted cans of food at home into those with and without added sugar. A holiday project was to keep a diary, in pictures or words, of the progress of a plant grown from seed.
84. The co-ordinator has worked hard to ensure that good long and medium-term planning promotes a sound progression of knowledge and skills throughout the school, and that assessment is used creatively to inform planning. Plans are in hand to update the schemes of work to meet new statutory requirements. The school should now ensure that lesson plans contain clear, precise learning objectives, and that children always understand them. Plans to organise further support and training for staff are timely and should enhance the teaching and learning.

ART & DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

85. There is substantial evidence that standards in these subjects are above expectation, and sometimes well above. The school has continued to build on the good standards reported at the time of the last inspection in 1996. Children are highly motivated to improve their knowledge and skills, and their work is often imaginative, detailed and carefully produced. For example, in art, individual portraits on display show well-developed observation and shading skills, and a sense of proportion and character.
86. A class book shows how well Year 4 and Year 1 children worked together to identify means to make the outdoor area more stimulating for investigative play. They very successfully designed and made models to communicate their ideas. Their understanding of the basic principles in design and technology is good at Key Stage 1 and very good at Key Stage 2.
87. Teaching and learning are consistently good and often very good. In the design and technology lesson at Key Stage 1 children were encouraged to design and make a product to encourage a reluctant eater to enjoy fruit and vegetables. The teacher's planning made explicit the links to literacy and science. Skilful questioning and explanation stimulated pupils' interest, and the classroom assistant's involvement helped the process of discussion and negotiation by which they finalised their plans. In the art lesson at Key Stage 2, the main activity of making African masks was successful in making creative demands on pupils. The task was well designed to encourage pupils to explore aspects such as pattern and texture. They confidently made good use of tools such as wire cutters, scissors and hole punches. Once again the presence of the assistant and the good subject knowledge of the teacher, were instrumental in stimulating the children to extend understanding of the subject, and their range of artistic and design skills.
88. Samples of previous work, the high quality of display around the school, and teachers' plans and records, demonstrate the central role both subjects have in the curriculum. They contribute well to children's spiritual, social and cultural development. A particularly strong feature of provision is the way outside expertise is used and how cross-curricular links are exploited. Excellent examples are visits from professional artists resulting in the Carved Stone Project and the extensive work about harvest in Africa. The school has combined with other local schools in an 'Arts in Trust' day at Stourhead Gardens. Such projects are meticulously planned, and followed up with evaluations by the children. Some of their perceptive comments about feelings or expression illustrate how the children are being encouraged to think about and appreciate the creative and expressive elements of art and design.
89. Projects such as the making of herb fritters and sandwiches with herbs from the school garden, and more recently chappatis for the Harvest Festival, show how cultural, geographical and historical links are exploited in design and technology. Social and personal development was fostered very well when children from Years 2 and 3 used large construction kits to design and make a walking frame for elderly people.
90. Planning for both subjects is very good. The policy documents include practical advice on methods of organising teaching and learning, lists of resources, and procedures for monitoring such aspects as health and safety, equal opportunities, and assessment. Advice is followed meticulously. In both subject areas, delivery of the curriculum is mainly through the medium of topics, but there is also appropriate emphasis on the body of skills and knowledge that is specific to each subject. Action plans are appropriate and are regularly reviewed. The co-ordinator has a clear vision for development, and is

rigorous in monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning in the school.

GEOGRAPHY & HISTORY

91. By the end of Key Stage 1 attainment is good in history and geography. Most children reach the standards expected and a substantial number of pupils exceed them. They continue to achieve highly by Year 4. From Year 1 to Year 4 children use their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills well to establish firm foundations in both subjects. Despite no lessons being observed in history, and only three in geography, the breadth of children's learning is evident. They have good knowledge and understanding of chronology, of differences in life in present times compared with the past, of people and places in Britain and around the world, and changes in their environment. This is demonstrated clearly in the wide variety and good quality of their recorded work. Much of this work is seen through drawings, diagrams, and photographs, as well as through different kinds of writing. In this respect the school is adept at ensuring children's achievement is celebrated.
92. At both key stages a high percentage of pupils, including several with statements, have special educational needs in language and literacy-related skills. The standards achieved by Year 4 are particularly good when taking pupils' levels of prior attainment into account. Their written work reflects some of the difficulties, notably with spelling and hand-control but also clearly shows how well they make efforts to master them.
93. Teaching and learning is never less than satisfactory and can be very good, at both key stages. Teachers have good subject knowledge, and make particularly imaginative use of the school environment and the village. They use a variety of artefacts, technological learning resources, and supporting adults very well. Pupils' progress is tracked and recorded rigorously. Interesting activities and challenging homework tasks are set and, overall, teachers are very successful at stimulating pupils' interest in learning.
94. At Key Stage 1, for example, the imaginative way in which teachers develop pupils' skill in pursuing cross-curricular lines of enquiry through observation and subsequent analysis and recording of information is evident in project work about local buildings. Encouraged by good questions and explanations from teachers and classroom assistants, they identified many differences between the old school and their own; they drew and listed them. Then the children used different methods for recording their own ideas. Some used concept keyboards and computers to word process captions for their drawings, others cut up phrases and sentences and pasted them in their books. Others used graphics programs to print off representations of old and modern buildings. All succeeded because of the careful match between what the teacher knew they were capable of doing, and the tasks set.
95. At Key Stage 2, for history, all pupils have undertaken an extended study of Saxon times. Each child produced a topic book showing the variety of things they have learnt about the period. They wrote their own versions of the Beowulf and the Dragon story, some of a very high standard, complete with contents page and chapters. They have discovered and listed place names with Saxon origins, and defined their meaning. They have decoded Saxon 'runes'. A higher attaining pupil even pursued research at home to increase knowledge about a Druid secret sign language called 'Ogham'. In geography, current work about a contrasting region is resulting in lots of fact-finding about Nigeria and in particular an appreciation and respect for the Yoruban culture and lifestyle.
96. At both key stages, pupils are enthusiastic, curious to explore and engage in new experiences. They respond very well to suggestions and instructions, are keen to initiate

ideas and undertake research. They co-operate effectively. Year 1 and 2 children, for example, thoroughly enjoyed creating a trail through the school grounds. They used their knowledge of direction, order and number to make markers and devise instructions for a visitor to follow. Class Year 2/3, used role-play to simulate life in an Indian village. They could empathise with the differences between living there compared with home. Class Year 3/4, in Africa project work, created publicity leaflets, drew musical instruments, found out about the work of OXFAM and wrote thank you letters to a Nigerian visitor.

97. The qualitative difference between the very good and satisfactory lessons seen was the extent to which teachers channelled pupils' energy and enthusiasm to ensure little time was wasted. There was a rigour and pace about the best that was missing in the weakest lesson. Teachers were more involved in dialogue, and intervened at appropriate points to remind children of expectations for learning and behaviour. Whereas in the lessons observed the youngest children stayed very much on task, the oldest pupils were inclined to talk rather than persevere continuously with their work. They were also slower to respond to requests to tidy up at the end of the lesson. These are the features that will need to be addressed.
98. A significant improvement since the last inspection is in the quality of leadership and management in both subjects. Teachers have strengthened the detail and depth of curriculum planning and assessment procedures. There is a strong focus on matching activities in lessons to individual learning needs, not just towards broad aims for a whole class. An impressive feature is the incorporation of cross-curricular links and opportunities for fostering pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development. These are extensive and even include, for the older children, a residential period of study at Coombe Bissett Down. The 'Watch Camp' was very successful in raising pupils' awareness of the wonders of nature and the importance of caring for a beautiful rural environment.
99. Both schemes of work are good enough for standards to continue to rise. The important task for the school will be to monitor teaching and learning methods so that the considerable strengths are maintained, and the relative weaknesses are eliminated. The capacity to succeed is very good.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

100. During the period of the inspection there was ample evidence, from subject files, work on display, teachers' planning, and discussions with children, to say with confidence that standards by Year 2 and Year 4 are above expectation in ICT. Children throughout the school are achieving almost to their full capacity. The school has enhanced the good provision reported at the time of the last inspection.
101. There are many examples to illustrate how well ICT is planned, taught and used throughout the curriculum, and how well children's enthusiasm is fostered. Teachers are skilled and confident, especially in using ICT to improve literacy, numeracy, and knowledge in other subjects. They constantly encourage children to practise and extend their ICT knowledge and skills in many meaningful contexts. Time, support staff and a wide range of very good quality resources are used very constructively to ensure that children acquire highly positive attitudes to their work.
102. In English pupils make daily use of ICT and tasks are appropriately matched to their needs. At Key Stage 1, for example, children worked individually to write instructions for

playing a catching game and then worked together to assemble them in order. A lower ability group was observed independently using the concept keyboard to create a sentence about the 'Little Red Hen' story. Older pupils were seen using the CD-ROM and the Internet to find information to use in their writing about humans and animals. They frequently plan, draft and re-draft pieces of writing to create special effects. For instance the older children have written about an ideal friend using different fonts, styles and colours.

103. Good use is made of graphics programs in mathematics, science, art, history and geography. Skills are systematically taught, with increasing demands on children's thinking and powers of interpretation. In history and geography, for example, the youngest children have made representations of different kinds of buildings, and sorted them into old and new. They have learnt how to use the mouse to place objects where they wish them to be on the screen and how to print their work. In the work on favourite foods, Year 3 and 4 have entered data about themselves, and compared the time taken to sort and present the data with and without the help of the computer. Junior children make extensive use of a digital camera to arrange text and pictures, experimenting with a variety of layouts. They analyse and record scientific data, such as when studying the weather. Learning in art is enhanced by the use of a program to explore shape, colour and pattern.
104. Resources are good, and the school has made very good use of central grants to keep up-to-date with new technology and equipment. The co-ordinator, through the sound policy and comprehensive action plan, has thoroughly reviewed present practice, and set out a highly relevant programme of improvements and developments. This includes such items as assuring equality of access to all children, a review of how effective ICT is in supporting literacy and numeracy, and objectives to purchase resources suitable for work in music. There is a good programme of training for staff. Much has already been undertaken and a particularly good outcome is the confident way in which non-teaching assistants support children with special educational needs. The overall breadth, balance and relevance of the curriculum ensure that the needs of children of all abilities are effectively met.

MUSIC

105. At both key stages attainment in music exceeds national expectations. Good standards have been sustained since the previous inspection. Children benefit from the depth and breadth of experience offered by teachers who have particular expertise in the subject. In the lessons observed children showed how well they are developing their knowledge of music from different cultures and genres. They demonstrated an impressive ability to listen critically, to improvise with instruments and create their own sound patterns. Many read and write simple notation. When singing in unison they are tuneful and moderate their voices appropriately.
106. The quality of teaching is consistently good, and pupils capitalise on lesson time, work hard, and thoroughly enjoy demanding and stimulating learning opportunities. Children at Year 1, for example, heard extracts of Indian music and could distinguish between contrasting sounds made by stringed instruments. The teacher enabled them to extend their understanding of the significance of vibration. They were able to control speed and duration, using a variety of instruments and body parts. They were good at inventing and repeating their own simple musical sequence.

107. At Years 2 and 3 pupils deployed more advanced skills. They were presented with a good choice of resources from which they could choose instruments to create a desired effect. In a lesson carefully planned to link with mathematical knowledge of time and duration, children discussed the sounds made by different kinds of clocks and watches. They improvised with percussion instruments and then made decisions about how to represent the timing mechanisms. They successfully produced a range of soft to loud sounds, and could maintain a steady pulse as they played.
108. Throughout both lessons, but especially at Year 1, children maintained high levels of concentration and effort. They behaved and co-operated well. The older children selected and followed a conductor, and performed sensibly together as an 'orchestra'. They were focused and enthusiastic. Pupils with special educational needs were as absorbed as their peers in the activities, and, supported by the classroom assistant, participated well. Access to instrumental tuition for keyboard, string and wind instruments gives pupils choice to develop special aptitudes and many take advantage of the opportunity. Especially gifted children join more advanced classes in the neighbouring middle school.
109. Music makes a substantial contribution to pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development. For example, music at daily assembly encourages calm entry, exit and quiet reflection. Participation in the Shaftesbury music festival, listening to the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, and singing carols by candlelight foster love of music and the pleasure of performing with, and for, other schools and audiences.
110. The subject is effectively led and managed. Detailed plans for each year group, assessment records and reports of learning outcomes provide substantial evidence of the way the school plans and evaluates continuity of learning. Teachers devise many imaginative ways of linking music to other subjects, including science, physical and religious education, design and technology, and ICT. There is a rigorous plan of action to improve provision further, both through the acquisition of resources such as music stands and more ICT programmes, and the extension of specialist teaching. The capacity to succeed with these objectives is very good.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

111. Inspection evidence indicates that standards at both key stages, which were satisfactory at the time of the last inspection, have been maintained. Children's achievement is good in swimming, because of regular access to the nearby community pool. Photographs of them at work indicate they develop poise and agility in dance. They are very safety conscious and knowledgeable about how exercise helps them to keep fit. There is a relative weakness in the extent to which they progressively develop skills by Year 4 in games.
112. Teaching was predominantly satisfactory but with a very good lesson at Year 1. In that lesson the teacher's expectations were high. Good class management ensured that no time was wasted and that pupils remained focused on the tasks throughout. Objectives were clear and the children were often challenged to describe what they were doing, or to explain how they could improve or extend the activity. For instance, they identified how to improve a landing by 'sinking down'. Children listened well to the teacher, watched carefully when other children demonstrated their activity, and tried hard to improve their own performance. They co-operated well working in pairs and showed a sensible and caring attitude towards those with less ability.

113. In the lessons seen with older children in the Sports Centre these good features were not so marked. Although the children enjoyed the activities, they were not as skilfully challenged to improve their ball skills by thinking more carefully about what they were doing, and analysing what was and was not effective. In class Year 3/4, when pairs or groups demonstrated for the rest of the class, a substantial minority was not watching carefully enough to gain any benefit, and were unable to improve their own performance as a result. In class Year 2/3 some sound suggestions for varying activities were introduced, for instance catching with one hand, but not enough emphasis was given to developing the precise technique required to be successful in this quite difficult skill.
114. A wide variety of activities are organised with frequent use of outside facilities and expertise to ensure that curriculum coverage is good. The way in which the school liaises with the Sports Centre staff, for example, is a positive feature of provision. Cross-curricular links are very well exploited. For instance, at Key Stage 1 the children created a drama/movement activity about moving house in connection with their Houses and Homes topic. Links with mathematics are emphasised through such activities as creating symmetrical and non-symmetrical shapes on the apparatus, and with science, at Key Stage 2, through the teaching about changes in pulse rates. Cultural and spiritual values are promoted well through such activities as African dance and percussion.
115. The co-ordinator has a very good knowledge of the subject, and has ensured that a thorough and comprehensive planning, recording and assessment system, missing at the time of the last inspection, is used throughout the school. This has been recognised in the awarding of an 'active mark' by the Sports Council.
116. In order to ensure consistently high standards of teaching and learning the co-ordinator now needs to monitor classroom practice and spread the most effective teaching methods throughout the school. Plans are already in place to increase staff expertise through extra training, and the school is continuing to employ visiting experts in the teaching of games, gymnastics and dance. They should also provide good role-models for effective teaching.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

117. Pupils at Key Stage 1 have sustained the sound standards reported in 1996 whilst standards at Year 4 are good. Provision is thorough and reflects the school's Church of England status. Children learn a lot about Christianity and to appreciate and understand the main features of other world religions, most specifically Judaism.
118. At Key Stage 1 children make sound progress. The strongest feature of their achievement is the developing understanding that God and Jesus are important to Christians and that the Bible is special. They realise that it contains graphic stories including many about how Jesus cared for others. They are gaining a sound understanding that they are unique and special and that religious customs and celebrations, such as Harvest Festival, can add enjoyment and meaning to family life.
119. At Key Stage 2 pupils' understanding of the subject develops rapidly. They are reflective about why people need a faith and why questions about life are difficult yet challenging to debate. They participate, each at their own level, in interesting discussion about the meaning of religious poetry and prose, including psalms from the Old Testament. They know some verses by heart that they sing and recite with feeling. They write sensitively and logically about the significance of Harvest Festival around the world.
120. In the two lessons observed teaching was satisfactory at Key Stage 1 and good at Key

Stage 2. The better one was more due to a greater awareness of children's wide-ranging depth of prior learning rather than to significant differences in preparation and planning. Both were good in the thought given to stressing the spiritual nature of the subject, the importance of appreciating others, and saying thank you to God. Both were also characterised by some good questioning and clarifying.

121. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and behave sensibly in lessons. The younger children sustain listening well for short periods but some lower attaining pupils lose concentration when inactive for longer than is usual for them. In the lesson observed younger pupils especially enjoyed looking at a poster about harvest and then drawing people to whom they say thank you. In photographs of previous learning experiences they are engrossed in paired discussion about a video they have watched about belonging to a church. The atmosphere in the older juniors' lesson was excellent as each child tried in their own way to express how they felt about the psalm they were studying. Even the children with the weakest reading skills were prepared to read out what appealed to them most, and all listened carefully, respecting the efforts of others.
122. The subject is effectively planned and co-ordinated. The Wiltshire Agreed Syllabus underpins the curriculum, and very good use is made of the associated planning and assessment frameworks. The school makes extensive use of its locality, of Wiltshire's resource lending services, and of artefacts from home and school to make lessons interesting for pupils. The only drawback noted was the timing of the lesson at Key Stage 1 that followed straight after a circle-time lesson. The demands on pupils' listening skills were high in both, and consideration could profitably be given to changing the timetable to allow children respite from such similar teaching and learning methods.